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II. *The sexual and language taboos of the sungi.*

881 The whole sungi is taboo to every uninitiated person and especially to women. A woman who has seen the " shondlo ", viz. the leaves which the circumcised put over their wound, and which form their only clothing, must be killed. But taboos abound for everybody. The sexual taboos are most noteworthy. Sexual intercourse is strictly prohibited to all inmates, men as well as shepherds ; breaking this law would kill the circumcised. Therefore the men must not go home, or at least as seldom as possible, during these three months. Married people in the village may have sexual relations ; but there must be no noise, no quarrels between jealous co-wives ; because, if they insult each other and if this is known in the sungi, the shepherds will come one evening and plunder that village. Strange to say, in the meantime obscene language is permitted and even recommended— a contrast which we shall often meet with during the marginal periods. Some of the formulae contain expressions which are taboo at other times ; when the women bring the food to the sungi, the shepherds who receive it from their hands are allowed to address them with as many unchaste words as they like. The mothers themselves have the right of singing obscene songs when they pound the mealies for the sungi.

192 As regards language, there are also special expressions used during the school which are either archaic or foreign ; for instance, 881 all orders are given in a tongue which is neither Thonga nor Sutho: Tshai goma, Go to the table ; Thari, Eat ; Khedi, Smear with white clay, etc. Often actions are not designated by the ordinary word, but by unusual terms. For instance, the daily smearing of the bodies with clay is called : " to eat sheep's fat. " To put on the leaves of the shondlo is " to eat sheep's flesh. " To be beaten with the mbuti sticks is " to drink goat's milk. " Evidently the aim of this terminology is to increase the impression of mystery which the rites must convey to the uninitiated.

866 As regards the rites of the marginal period, they are calculated 881 to give the candidates the impression that they are new men,

584 On the appointed day, they go and sit outside the village of
374 the fiancé and cough to announce their presence. The same strange proceedings begin, but this time it is the damsels who make difficulties and the young men must beg and entreat them to enter first the village, then the hut, and then to sit on the mats and to accept food. Each of the groomsmen is most attentive to the girl he chose at the preceding meeting and, to obtain her good will, he generally gives her a fowl or the equivalent in money. In the early morning the visitors rise, go and get water, warm it a little and pour it into basins before the doors of the huts, so that, on that day, the inhabitants of the village will make their ablutions with water fetched by them. Then they go and do feminine work, acting as servants of the fiancé's parents. Thus they remove the ashes from the fire-place and throw them on the ash-heap close by; they cut the wood for the young men's mothers and light the several fires of the village. They pretend to leave when the sun sets, but no one will hear of it, and they must spend another night. At last, on the following day, they go home, accompanied by the young men and again, at parting, knot grasses together. On the day of the *koroka* definite arrangements are made for the wedding.

3) Taboos of the betrothal period.

584 The two families which enter into relation with each other by
574 marriage must observe many taboos (See Part II). Here are some
784 of those which are enforced during the visits of *tjekela* and *koroka*:
262 1) The visitors must not eat all the mealie corn on the spike; they must leave a few grains on it.

2) They must not tear off the leaves which are round the spike. When they have eaten all the corn, they rearrange these leaves in such a way that the cob seems not to have been touched.

3) They must not " make a hole in the pot " (bobota hotjo), viz. they leave a portion of the liquid in the beer pot, they do not empty it entirely.

4) It is forbidden to return home in rain when one has gone

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584 to *tjekela*. You must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an
574 insult to the future father-in-law.
784 5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not
262 take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor—the owner of the oxen—must not eat black fish that day. Only his friends have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear lest the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black: it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, is slippery... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about; thus the marriage " might be scattered (hangalasa bukati) before it is ripe ". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo until the families had killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are family taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by the mutual distrust of two allied families.

585 The wedding feast consists of two parts: the *lobola feast*, viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobolo which takes place at the bride's village, and the *tlhoma*, viz. the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

585 On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close
273 at hand. The bride's family in particular must prepare in good time, as they have to provide the beer which will be consumed in

581 says: "Nsati wa mabele u nga nabele loko u nge na bukosi."
832 — "Do not covet a woman with large breasts if you have no money..." This does not mean that she will cost more, but her father, knowing that she will not want for suitors, will not consent to let her go unless the full lobolo is paid at once. On the other hand a girl with an elongated face is admired more than one who is too broad-faced. Of the first they say: "She is pretty, she resembles an antelope" (a kota mhala); of the second: "She is
832 chubby-cheeked, she is like a sow." A light complexion is preferred
186 to a very dark one, because the white or yellow races are regarded
734 as superior, and a Native laying claim to any European or Asiatic
581 blood is proud of it. Parents, who also have their say in the
824 question of marriage, insist on two other points; the working capacity of the girl, and the absence of any witchcraft blot in the family. Should her mother have been convicted of being a witch,
581 the girl will be feared. However, every girl finds a husband in the
583 land where polygamy flourishes. If he be slow in coming, she will apply to her doctor, who will prepare the *love charms*, which will make her "appear," so that she will be noticed by the boys (See page 100). If even that does not succeed, she has other means at her disposal and may go herself to make proposals to a man (wopsana). He is seduced by her, and constitutes himself a thief who has *tlhuba*, viz. "taken in marriage by abduction" (See page 119). The parents will claim the lobolo and he must pay it. Marriage and childbearing remain the only carreer to which a Thonga woman can look forward. Hence a number of special feminine taboos which are very curious.

2) Special feminine taboos.

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825 Some of them concern girls *before childbearing* and cease after parturition. In the Tembe and Maputju clans, girls must not eat pork, because pigs root nervously with their noses: the future child would also move its head from one side to the other, when on the verge of birth, and this would make delivery difficult. Other

animals are taboo for girls : the *hare* because it is too cunning ; and the antelope *nhlengane*. This antelope raises the foot when it hears a noise ; hence the idea that its leg is hollow and that it perceives the sound through it. The child would do the same, if its mother were to eat the meat of the nhlengane. It would be unable to hear with its ears, only with its hands!

The *legs* of fowls (tibias) are also taboo for all women, because the hen scatters the sand... So are the *hoofs of oxen*, and *pigs' feet*. A woman eating them would walk too much... She would go everywhere to look for husbands!

It is taboo for a girl to *walk amongst pumpkin plants* (maranga), to pluck the fruits. She is only allowed to pluck those which can be reached from outside. Were she to transgress this law, she would emit a bad odour, and no boy would court her. Her mother, having no fear of being despised, can walk amongst the pumpkins. A second taboo relative to pumpkins is this : unmarried women must cut a "pumpkin nose" (nhompfu) viz. the end of the stem, and fix it at their waist when plucking the pumpkins, lest they get abcesses in certain regions of their body.

It is taboo for them to eat cooked *oxen blood* (bubendje). The following taboos apply also to *married women*. They are not allowed to eat what is called *nkopfu*, viz. some parts of the bowels which are cooked together with the stomach of the ox. "It would spoil the child inside." The *testicles*, which are generally given to the uterine nephew when the meat is distributed according to the laws, and the *underlip* of any animal are also forbidden to them. So is also the *tongue*... because it is reserved for old people as a mark of respect! The *rectum* (gobana) is taboo for women and children. Children might make unseemly noises from the rectum! Women must abstain from *porcupine* and *monkeys' flesh* ; all their offspring would resemble these animals. Such cases have happened, it is said! Women must not eat *eggs* ; they would run a double danger : their child might be born bald and remain so ; or they might be like a hen, which runs in all directions when laying an egg. They would have no peace in child bearing! (See also page 101.)

Nubile girls, during their "tiwheti," must not *approach the*

Nubile girls during their "tiwheti" must approach the *oxen kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D. Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.)

When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if they wish!

3) The first year of married life.

I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that, though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale, puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot (hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

What are the relations between husband and wife after the honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to the character of both. As a rule however, the married people have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the reed enclosure of the fire-place, which is the true domain of the

843 754 to hinder the child from growing and to put in its place, by means of her enchantments, a snake, a hare, a quail or an antelope!

834 846 [886] After the birth, owing to possible contamination by the lochia, sexual intercourse is prohibited till the rite of tying the cotton string (p. 56) has taken place. It is then allowed, but conception must be avoided till weaning, when relations are resumed in the normal way, and this goes on till the time when the woman is no longer able to bring forth children. I know of no special rules in connection with the menopause.

* * *

831 But, amongst Bantus, sexual relations are not an individual affair, as amongst nations more advanced in evolution. There is a mysterious relation between them and the collective life of the community. Hence the fact that, on certain given occasions, they are recommended, even ordered, or prohibited.

1) Cases of recommendation.

833 783 587 829 Sexual relations must take place on two principal occasions : when the inmates of a village abandon it and go elsewhere to found a new one, and when the widows perform the painful rite of "lahla khombo" (to cast away misfortune). We shall see, when studying these customs, that sexual relations have here a twofold signification : 1) they "consolidate" the little community in its new abode, viz. they strengthen its structure by confirming the authority of its chief ; 2) they provide the principal means of getting rid of all contamination, especially of the defilement connected with death. (Annotatio 13.)[1]

2) Cases of prohibition.

834 784 581 829 753 Married people are not considered as being in a state of defilement, as mourners are, for example. Yet this class of persons, called "ba-ku-khila," constitute a danger for those members of the community who are in a weak state of health. They must not come in contact with the circumcised, because in that case their wounds would not heal properly.

1 [See pp. 518-519 in these categories or in VL--Analyst]

834 784 381 829 753 They must not enter the hut of a person dangerously ill; this would hasten his death. People who are just recovering from a disease, when they walk about on the paths, must tie around their ankles the root called sungi, which will protect them against the perspiration or emanation left by married people in their footprints, because, as one of my informants said, "ba-ku-khila ba hisa," viz. married people are hot.

834 836 581 829 Moreover not only individuals but the whole social life would be endangered if sexual relations took place when the community itself is in a critical position. They are prohibited therefore in wartime, during the whole duration of hunting parties, and also during the marginal periods. Strange to say, this law does not apply so severely to unmarried boys and girls amusing themselves according to the "shigango" custom (p. 97). It seems that it is not the act in itself which is tabooed, but the act in as much as it is accomplished by regularly married people; in this case only has it a bearing on the life of the community.

What is the reason of these prohibitions? "Married people are hot." What does this aphorism mean? The following rite may help us to understand it.

831 834 226 829 789 771 In the Malulcke country, when the whole population enters a lake to kill fish according to the tjeba custom (Part IV. Chap. I), a little boy and a little girl are chosen and laid down under a lion's skin, as if they were husband and wife, and told to remain very quiet during all the time the grown up people are fishing. Not knowing anything about sexual intercourse, they will obey; then the fish also will keep quiet and will be killed easily. Why? Because there is in the sexual act something wild, fierce, passionate which, according to the law of correspondance which is at the base of all Bantu magic, has an influence on the hostile forces: these will be excited and more difficult to overcome: enemies in battle, the animals of the bush during hunting and fishing parties, disease, danger of contamination at death and during the marginal periods. Life is, so to speak accelerated by the sexual act, and this acceleration is communicated to the whole of Nature. Therefore: Keep quiet, be continent!

This profound conception of life also explains why so often certain actions must be accomplished by children, not yet able to have sexual relations, or by old women who no longer practise them.

Let us remark that all these rites do not belong to Animism, properly speaking, but to Dynamism (Part VI. Chap. I), which plays a part almost as important as Animism in Bantu primitive philosophy.

606 these bukoñwana rules would cause death. Yet they are religiously kept as necessary to ensure normal relations between the two families.

We have already seen the taboos which must be observed during the betrothal period (p. 106). Later on, during the gatherings which take place *before marriage*, other taboos are imposed.

606 802 201 584 784 1. In the discussion concerning the lobola, when oxen are counted, the bridegroom's parents must never offer eight head of cattle, because one of them will be killed for the feast, and so eight means only seven. *Seven* is counted by raising, one after the other, the five fingers of the left hand and the thumb and index-finger of the right. In raising the index-finger, they might point it at the bakoñwana, and this would be a mortal offence. To point at anyone with the index-finger is as bad as bewitching him. It is done only in anger, and all the preceding discussions might be nullified if such an imprudence were committed.

2. Should one of the oxen be frightened by the shouts of joy with which the arrival of the herd is greeted and by the sham-fight of the lobola day, and run away home, it is taboo. The ox has seen that something is wrong and has consequently fled. Even should they succeed in bringing it back, "timpfalo ti tjukile," the conscience (or the diaphragm) has been stirred!

584 825 777 784 3. If one of the oxen has no horns (homu ya mhulu), or only abortive horns, psa yila : *bukoñwana byi ta pfumala timpsalu*, viz., the relations with relatives-in-law will have no tenderness, because such an ox moves its head to and fro as it wanders in the night ; it is abnormal. The bride's family will not accept it.

4. Should the lobolo consist of hoes, and should the rain fall on them while they are being carried to the b[illegible]ana, it is taboo. The lobolo must not be brought in a w[illegible]on, otherwise the new relations will be spoilt (bukoñwana by[illegible] tshipa) ; the young people will not be able to marry.

5. Do not bring with you tobacco in the leaf when going *bukwen* as a fiancé, bring only ground tobacco, or misfortune will happen. Later on, when you have married your wife, it is allowable.

6. Never eat zebra or reedbuck's meat when staying with your parents-in-law. Should they kill one of these animals while

584 825 777 784 you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. The zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal of two colours; moreover it has no horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours, it has too long bowels. Psa yila! The reedbuck cries: "Dzoo." It is a witch: a mukoñwana must not eat it. For the same reason a sheep without horns is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When you go with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shiwalo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall to the ground, psa yila! Return home!

606 609 784 618 825 177 8. From a Thonga of the Maputju country I once heard that it was a great taboo in that district for a man to drink milk with his parents-in-law; let us say rather to *eat* milk, as Natives always take it in its solid form, i. e. curdled. This man was a Christian; he had given up many heathen customs and had gone so far as to partake of milk with his mother-in-law, but, the people all round were very much shocked at his conduct. Pushing my inquiry further, I heard that the milk taboo was observed not only with bakoñwana, but with all the inhabitants of the country who did not belong to one's clan; curdled milk was to be eaten only with people bearing the same family name. In other words, it is forbidden to eat milk *in any village where one can take a wife*. In a very interesting paper published in the *South African Journal of Science*, 1925, p. 481, Mrs A. W. Hoernlé says that this custom is wide-spread amongst many Bantu tribes of Central and South Africa, and explains it by the very intimate relationship which is thought to exist between human beings and cattle. The oxen are one with the clan to which they belong, and only members of that clan can partake of the milk of their cows. I never met with this idea in the other parts of the Thonga tribe, and I may remark that, as the Maputju clan is settled very near to the Zulus and has been more or less "zuluised", this custom might very well have been borrowed from its neighbours. Further researches will show whether the other Thonga clans have preserved what seems to be a very old Bantu idea, or at any rate traces of it. This is quite possible.

584 777 784 9. Do not build a hut for your wife before you have married her. Mankhelu says: "Even if you have plenty of money to lobola, if you make such a blunder your wife will be taken from you.

777 from you... In the same manner, do not prepare the skin for
784 the child before it is born. Your wife would not bring forth a human being. Should you transgress this rule, you would bring misfortune on yourself (wa tihlolela, wa singita), and on your family. If you go to Moneri (the missionary) and ask him for a skin for this purpose before the birth of your child, he will tell you it is so." Note the deep-rooted conviction of the old heathen, who appeals to the authority of the missionary to strengthen the taboo!

585 10. Later on, when you are married, you must avoid eating
784 honey with your wife for a whole year, till she has had a child.
777 The bride is allowed to eat honey at her parent's home, but not in
262 her new domicile and with her husband. The husband can eat it in the bush, but he must wash his hands when he comes back, lest his wife should notice it. She would run home if she knew of it. We have already met with this prohibition in the tjekela visit, and heard the reason for it: honey flows; the bride would go! The explanation now given is this: honey is too sweet, and your bride is too sweet also. (Is it not your honey-moon or honey-year?) The two things do not go together. (Psa yalana, they hate each other.) A third reason is this: Bees, when they have eaten their honey, fly away from the hive. So would your wife do... After a year this misfortune is no longer to be feared.

606 This last idea is very curious. It shows that the bukoñwana
581 taboos *decrease in severity as time passes*. The strained relations between the son-in-law and his wife's mother also become easier. He begins to call her mamana, and she calls him ñwana. This transformation even goes so far that in some cases a mukoñwana can go and dwell in his parents-in-law's village, especially if he has children and if the children are grown up. And this fact gives us the natural explanation of these curious rules.

Marriage, as we have seen, is not an individual affair in the collective stage of family life. It is a contract made between two groups, which enter by it into a special relation towards each other. This relation is fraught with danger, because the interests of both groups are involved; a bride and bridegroom are inspired with a mutual feeling of fear, knowing that an

247 (L.), with its white or pink blossoms, which have spread all over
331 the coast.

Having now finished our first general inspection, let us add some details about the huts and the open places in the village.

342 The hut, the construction of which we shall describe later on,
784 (Part IV) has an opening (nyangwa) of variable dimensions closed by a door. In some parts of the Gaza country it is so small that one must positively crawl to enter it. Everywhere one must at any rate stoop low (korama). As regards the *threshhold* (ntjandja wa shipfalo), it is not taboo to step over it. The headman's threshhold however is dreaded because it was treated with medicines when the hut was built, so it is taboo to sit on it ; these powerful medicines might do harm and
342 even cause death. In the middle of the black clay floor is a
354 kind of raised circle, in the centre of which fire is occasionally lighted in winter on account of the cold. It is the interior *shitiko*. Cooking may be done here if it rains ; glowing embers sometimes remain on it during the night and numberless babies have been burnt to death by falling into the fire while their mothers were
513 sleeping. On the left, on entering, is the sleeping place (shilawo)
853 of the wife, on the right that of the husband. They both however
841 generally spread their mats on the right and sleep beside each other. It is only during the tabooed periods (menses, nursing), that the husband must keep to his own particular side (p. 188).

353 The back of the hut is generally occupied by the big basket (ngula) in which clothing and seeds are kept. This spot is called *mfungwe*. In the roof *(lwangu)* are fixed or suspended various articles : ears of sorghum or millet, cobs to be used as seed at the next sowing, assagais, sticks and knobkerries etc., and against the walls one frequently observes rough drawings made with white clay, or, in the vicinity of towns, chromos of Queen Victoria, Edward VII, or Don Carlos, as the case may be!

361 The hubo and the bandla differ from each other. *Bandla* is
351 a Zulu word which has supplanted the Ronga term *shisiso*, viz.,
562 "the place where one finds shelter from the wind." Men light a small fire there to warm themselves. They also eat together

621 396 nature of that social unit, the Thonga *muti*. I shall give the sequence of these rites first in the Northern clans, according to the description of Viguet, and secondly amongst the Ba-Ronga, according to Mboza.

I. *In the Northern clans.*

621 787 784 1) The headman goes first to examine some spots where he would like to build. He *breaks small twigs* from various trees and brings them home.

833 2) The bones are consulted and help in *making a choice*. The twigs are placed on a mat one after the other. When the stone of the *kanye* (see Part VI) falls in a certain way in front of one of the twigs, this shows that the tree from which it has been broken is the one near which the hut of the headman must be built.

3) Building material is collected. When everything is ready to proceed to the construction of the huts, the headman goes with his principal wife to the spot chosen. They leave the old village for ever ; they must not return to it any more. In the evening they have *sexual relations* in the new place and in the morning they tie together some tufts of living grass. Next day all the people of the old village must come and step upon this grass. This rite is called to *tie the village* (boha muti).

621 595 784 834 4) Then begins the period, of about one month, called *buhlapfa*, time of moving, which has its laws. Two great taboos dominate it : 1) Sexual relations are absolutely prohibited. Should any one transgress this law, he has sinned gravely against the headman ; he has stolen the village (yiba muti). The headman will be ill, perhaps paralysed. The guilty woman will also be punished : she will not be able to bear children again ; she will be "tied by the village" (bohiwa hi muti). The culprits have "crossed the way of the master of the village" (tjemakanya). Strange to say, the headman himself is bound by this law. He must have no relations *with his younger wives*, because the village belongs to the principal spouse. Should such a transgression be discovered, the work

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of building will be stopped at once and the little community will find another place to which to move! Moreover the guilty woman will have to ask the principal wife for forgiveness. 2) A second great taboo is this : — No one must wash his body during the whole "buhlapfa", as this might cause the rain to fall and it would interfere with the building operations.

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5. The building of the huts begins immediately, each man making the circular wall first. When all the walls are ready,

Carrying a roof.

the *roofs are carried* from the old village to the new by all the men together. They lift each roof on to their shoulders, after having removed the old grass, and go out of the village, not by the main entrance, but by one of the back gates which has been widened for the purpose. A broad road has been prepared through the bush. They follow it, marching as fast as they can, and singing the obscene songs which are reserved for special occasions (see Part VI). In these they insult the women who accompany them, carrying the baskets, the mortars, the pestles. "The village is broken in pieces, so are the ordinary laws. The insults which are taboo are now allowed" (Mboza). This suspension of morality in speech is only allowed on the day when roofs are carried to the new village. Some days later, again, the women will take their revenge when they smear the floor of the huts ; then they too will sing their songs, insulting the men. But

entrance and finishes his walk at the other, hanging upon it the branch with which he has been sprinkling.

10) Then he sacrifices a hen. A young man accompanying him cuts its throat ; the doctor plucks some feathers from the neck, sacrifices in the ordinary way and invokes his gods : "You used to treat villages (daha miti) with these drugs and I do the same. I do not act of my own wisdom ; you have given it to me. Bless this place, etc." Then he plucks a feather from the hen's right wing, and suspends it at the main entrance or in the main hut, inside, over the door, according to the directions given by the bones. This is the *shirungulo* (see Part VI) and the act is called : "to tie the village" (tjimba muti).

Amongst the Rongas, there are some other *buhlapfa taboos*. It is not allowable to light any fire in a village until it is completely built. During the whole building period, cooking is done outside the fence ; crushing mealies in the mortars and dancing are also prohibited. Whistling (ku ba noti) is forbidden, as it might call the wizards inside the village before it has been protected by the charms.

If a man has many wives, he may build a second village for himself and establish one of them there. A grown-up son, the son of the woman, will represent the headman in that village, but the law of "tying the village" will also be observed in this case. The headman will perform the act with this woman, and preside at the burning of the dried grass and of the medicinal pill, by which he *gives* the village to the inhabitants.

When a younger brother, or a son, leaves the headman and founds a village for himself (tihambela muti), he does it according to the same laws as those observed at the regular moving of a village.

III. *Some remarks on the rules of moving.*

Let us now analyse the two parallel sequences of rites which we have just described, and which complete each other. It is easy to discover amongst them three series of rites, social, protective and passage rites.

484 comes to ask for his property! What cunning displayed in confusing the real issue and evading payment! (1)

Travelling consequently plays a great part in the life of these tribes, and it is no wonder that it is subject to many rules and that many taboos must be observed on the road in order to succeed in these expeditions.

I may mention first the four following taboos.

484 A traveller must not *take salt* with him when he goes either to
777 pay a visit, or to hunt, or on a business trip, or else he will not
784 succeed in his object ; he must avoid *sharpening assagais* on the road ; this would rouse his enemies and "awaken thorns" on the path ; he must take care *not to pluck milala leaves*, those used for weaving baskets : it would be an insult to the people on whom he is calling. Let him cut these leaves when returning, or else he will find trouble in the village to which he goes, lamentations, shoutings, disgusting sights. When he finds on the road people occupied in *digging a grave*, he must go at once and help them for a while. If he neglects this duty, he will take upon himself the misfortune (titekela khombo). He will not succeed in his purpose. Should he be in the village when some person dies, he must take part in the purification of the inmates.

825 There are some kinds of animals which bring bad luck to the
777 traveller. In order to "keep the road clean" (basisa ndlela), he
484 must beware of the *mampfana bird*, a kind of crane called "the preventer of the journey" (sibaliyendjo (Ro) shitsinyariendjo (Dj). Should this bird fly across the road, with wide-spread wings, it would be enough to make the party return home : there is danger of death before them and the "mampfana" comes to warn them

609 (1) One day one of my neighbours, named Mandjia, was arranging to start for
484 Bilene to "follow his goods" (landja bukosi) ; he came and requested me to give him a letter. "What for? Your debtors do not know how to read and I do not know anything about your affairs." — "It does not matter," said he. "The important point is that I should have a paper in my hand. They will be afraid. They will think that I come from the White people with their authority." I did not like to refuse a small favour to a neighbour; on the other hand I was somwhat reluctant to help him in a none too moral plan, so I gave him a letter addressed to the Portuguese Intendant of these countries in which I stated that I knew him. It was a kind of pass... What use did he make of it? The fact remains that he came back with his oxen, and I believe the sight of the mysterious paper was not without influence in the transactions which ended in the recovery of his property!

574 609 travellers be refused the customary hospitality in a village and incur misfortune later on, the chief will make the people of that village responsible and they will have to pay a fine. In Gungunyana's country, warriors were sent to plunder such a village. Lack of hospitality, however, is not considered as a taboo (yila), because "it does not kill;" it is a bad action (biha).

Now-a-days, customs are beginning to change; hundreds of young men (magaisa) coming from the towns after working there, pass through the country, and it would be impossible to put them up and feed them all. They sleep on the *bandla* and cook food for themselves, occasionally buying some mealies or a hen from the inhabitants. Moreover they have plenty of money and they can pay!

609 618 761 It must also be added that, if they dispense hospitality liberally, the Thongas can be very hard on people who do not belong to their special clan. Feelings of humanity are sometimes strangely deficient. I heard of a [illegible] of the Manyisa district who had fallen down near the lake of Rikatla, unable to proceed further on account of a bad wound received while working on the railway at Lourenço Marques. Nobody took pity on him because he was of another clan, and he would have died there if a Christian woman, named Lois, had not received him in her village and nursed him. Fear of death and its contamination may partly explain this want of compassion for strangers.

784 643 677 As already mentioned, it was formerly taboo to enter the village square wearing boots. These boots consist of sandals made by the hunters for their long trips through the thorny bush. They were not allowed on the hubo. A subject was not permitted to sit on a mortar or on anything else; the chief alone could do so, and it was considered a sign of pride to sit on anything but the bare ground!

609 177 574 The habit of offering a concubine to passers-by is never met with amongst the Rongas as it is in other tribes. Now-a-days dissolute women may offer themselves. But they have learnt from white men this new kind of immorality.

On the fate of the Thonga Village, see Practical Conclusions. V.

789 of most people! This honey comes from below. It is a hidden,
825 a mysterious thing. A little of it is added to the drug and the
787 mixture is poured into a double horn, viz., two horns whose large ends are firmly fixed to each other, the point where they meet being carefully covered with dung, which acts as glue. A hole has been made in the upper horn and the drug is introduced through this. It is a great means of divination. When war is imminent, the nyokwekulu begins to ferment, and exudes through the hole: "It knows all about war." So the country can prepare for it. No wonder that this powerful medicine is preserved with superstitious awe and the greatest care.

643 A place of honour is reserved for the magical horn in the
595 hut of the first wife of the chief. In the middle of the hearth
372 a perpetual fire burns; it must never be allowed to go out; it
824 is taboo. The wood used for it must be that of a tree found on the sea shore, and called ntjobori. The Makaneta sub-clan must furnish it regularly. It is taboo to take embers from this fireplace, which is called the royal fire, the medicinal fire (ndjilo wa buhosi, wa muri). Should the principal wife let the fire go out, then Godlela must be called on to light it again, rubbing together two sticks of a shrub called ntjopfa. The fire produced by burning this shrub is considered dangerous. It is taboo to cut its branches or to use them for the purpose of warming oneself; the genitalia are said to swell when this law is transgressed (See Part IV). But Godlela does not fear; has he not his drugs to protect himself? He can and must use ntjopfa to re-light the nyokwekulu fire, and he will be given a good reward for his work! The ntjobori, in burning, produces an abundant smoke which leaves a deposit on the horn, on the forked branch and on all the calabashes containing the provision of powder.

643 The queen Mimpanyanhoba who was in charge of the
372 nyokwekulu had no sexual relations with the chief on that account.
595 I do not know if absolute continence is always enforced on the
784 keeper of the sacred fire, as was the case for the Roman Vestal Virgins. But I have been told by Mboza that this woman prevented her co-wives from coming near her hut; it was taboo.

643 The grass of the roof of this hut must never be removed, though
784 it may rot owing to the rains. It is taboo. One simply puts
356 a layer of new grass over the old one, a thing which is rarely done in the case of ordinary roofs.

643 In case of war, should the clan be obliged to leave the country,
789 a special little hut is hastily built in the bush and the precious medicine is deposited therein. There is no fear that the enemy
722 will take it, either Whites or Natives, because this hut also has the attribute of invisibility. This happened during the war of 1894 (1). In the case of the *mhamba* of the Tembe and Zihlahla clans it is different; the man who keeps it must run away with it and with the chief.

643 Such are the laws of the mphulo. This great medicine may
789 certainly be regarded as a part of the regalia, and the most important part. It is, for the chief and sub-chiefs, a means of strengthening their authority, as will be seen in the description of the luma rite. On the other hand the mphulo is a collective possession, the powerful magic means by which the clan resists its enemies or conquers them. It occupies the very centre of the national life.

789 In the Manyisa clan the war-medicine is called *mabophe*, and is
726 kept by a man called Chikiza, who belongs to the Ntjeko clan, not
643 to the royal family. He is said to have inherited it from his
787 forefathers. The medicine however belongs to the chief. It is administered as follows. The *ñanga* prepares small heaps of wood on the road, pours a little of the drug over them, sets fire to them and the warriors tread on the embers and extinguish the fire with their feet. This makes them invulnerable or at least protects them against fatal wounds. When they are ready to start for battle, the bones are thrown, and give the following intimation:
643 "Do not kill the first enemy you meet with, but catch him alive, be
789 it a man or a woman, and bring him to the chief." The chief,
726 accompanied by some indumas, must stab him outside the royal kraal; the body of the deceased enemy will then be cut open, and

(1) In the Nondwane the nyokwekulu is still kept by the heir of Maphunga, Magomanyana. The new chief, the usurper, tried to find it, but Godlela refused to give it to him. Thus Mubvesha has no *mphulo*.

643 seems to have been particularly feared. He had even bought
619 poison from white people and is said to have killed his rival, Musongi, chief of the Maputju clan, with whom he fought the battle of Malangotiba in 1870. He sent a woman of bad life to Maputju. The woman succeeded in winning the confidence of the king and poured this poison into his glass. Nowadays the Ronga chiefs have been taught by the Authorities to sit in council when discussing matters.

643 The two principal prerogatives of the chief are the right of *luma* and taxation.

III. *The right of luma, and the first fruits rites.*

181 We come to a set of rites which might be dealt with when
241 considering the Agricultural life, but I prefer to describe them here, as they provide us with a typical illustration of the constitution of the clan ; they are highly characteristic of the Bantu community, a community which is essentially agricultural in its pursuits, animistic in its beliefs, and hierarchic as regards its social and national life.

643 We have already met with the word *luma* and noticed that
262 its ordinary meaning is *to bite* ; its ritual sense is to *remove the*
784 *injurious character of a given food by a certain ceremony*. The luma
527 is a necessity before eating the flesh of certain wild beasts, as we
241 shall see when studying the laws of hunting (See Part IV). But it is of still more importance, and one of the great laws of the clan, that the official luma shall take place before the subjects eat the products of the new year. There seem to be two ideas at the root of this strange taboo :

1) To eat certain kinds of food is dangerous for one's health, and the first mouthful taken must be seasoned with the royal drug.

2) The gods, the chief, and elder brothers, have a prior right to enjoy the products of the soil. To precede them in doing this is a sin which would bring them misfortune. The hierarchy must be absolutely respected.

726 As regards the *order of the march*, the battalions of the young
701 men, stationed on either side of the entrance, go first ; they
643 form the advanced guard, the post of greatest danger. The scouts, tinhlori (Dj.) tinhloli (Ro.), go in front ; each company has its leader to whom these scouts bring reports. It is the duty of the young men to surround the position to be carried and to make the assault. The two sides of the circle then follow, and lastly the chest of the army, forming the rear guard. The chief thus brings up the rear, protected by the battalions of veterans. But generally the chief does not go to battle ; he remains at home.

726 During the campaign, *the whole clan is subjected to many taboos.*
784 Those who remain at home must *keep quiet* (rula). No noise
777 must be heard in the villages. The women must not close the
722 doors of the huts. It is taboo : their husbands might meet with "bitterness" (shibiti). They might lack strength to run away. Fire must be lit in the huts in the evening, in order that the warriors may "have light" where they are. It is taboo to omit this precaution. Work in the fields must be more or less suspended ; women may attend to it in the morning only, before the heat of the day, while the air is still fresh. "Then, if a warrior has stepped on a thorn, the thorn will be cool (titimeta) ; if he has knocked against a stump, the stump will be quiet and not hurt him. (Mboza.)" Old men who remain at home must keep watch, and if they see a messenger coming, they follow him to the chief.
765 Should he bring bad news, they do not inform the women, as it is
726 taboo to mourn over warriors killed in war before the return of the
834 army. A fine is imposed upon those who contravene this law.
777 It is taboo also to have sexual relations as long as the army is on the
784 war-path. This would cause thorns to hurt the warriors and they would be defeated. (Mankhelu.)

722 According to Mankhelu, the mukhumbi may be again formed after arriving in the proximity of the hostile army. The
643 battalions will be sent one after the other by the great ndjuna who
726 will watch the progress of the fight. If he sees his men giving way, he "pours" (tshelela) new companies to help those who are fighting until they rush the position (gwabula) and put the enemy to flight. Then the pursuit begins. The dust flies up

784 For additional taboos connected with animals and with hunting see pp. 63-71.

343 or in small storehouses hung to the branches of trees (mfunge). When the harvest has been plentiful and all the storehouses have been filled, then begins the happy time of winter, of beer drinking, *bumanga* playing, (I. p. 431) paying visits, etc.

II. *Agricultural taboos.*

241 784 The first category of agricultural taboos are those previously mentioned, which spring from the idea of *hierarchy*: the prohibition to sow pumpkin seeds before the elder members of the family, the prohibition to enjoy the first-fruits (Kafir corn, bukanye, etc.) before the gods, the chief, the headman, and the elder brothers have *luma* (I, p. 394). Others belong to the *special feminine taboos*, (girls not allowed to walk amongst the pumpkins, to pluck their fruit or to pick their leaves without certain precautions, I. p. 184). Another category is that of *shimusi*. Certain days are proclaimed by the chief, or fixed by custom, as sabbath days, on which no one is allowed to till the soil. In Ñwamba, when there has been a little rain, it is taboo for the people of the clan to work in the fields ; they must remain at home. Amongst the Nkunas the day on which the new moon appears is also shimusi. The moon must be left to "become firm" (tiyela, hola) ; to cut roots while it is still "soft" is taboo : it would cause strong winds and hail. Complete rest is also customary in Khosen the day following the birth of twins. (See Part VI. Chap. II). Some other taboos are due to the fear of *wizards* : it is forbidden to whistle in the fields after having sown or until the mealies are grown. This would call the "baloyi" and endanger the harvest.

241 754 784 821

241 784 It is a taboo for a woman to remain in a standing position when she borrows a living ember (woka) from people cooking their food in their gardens ; she must sit down when she takes the ember. Should she break this law, it would cause the mealies of the owners of that garden to be burnt (psha) ; the women has "crossed their gardens" (tjemakanya). If however she does this, they

will call her on the day they begin to sow, and she will have to sow the first seed; thus she will prevent all the seeds from "burning." 241 784

But the most stringent taboos are connected with the *threshing of the cereals*. This work is exclusively done by women, and it is taboo for the men to approach the threshing floor. The Makanetas, who cultivate rice extensively, cut the ears and pile them into heaps in their own huts and not on the threshing floor. When the grain is dry, they thresh it by trampling on it. Should any woman pass by, it is taboo to speak to her. If she enters the hut and helps for a little while with the work, then the taboo is removed and you, the owners of the rice, can talk to her. — "Should you do so without that condition being fulfilled, this person would *take your rice* and leave you nothing but the husks (mataha). Should a relative, dwelling in the neighbouring district, come and see you whilst you are threshing rice, don't give her any part of your harvest: let her crush it in the mortar and take it away husked, lest you lose all your grain and keep the husks only! The husks of the rice which you give to your relative must remain with you." (Mboza). The same applies to Kafir corn. To allow a relative from outside to pluck ears from your garden, to thresh them and take them home means to "spoil your corn" (onha mabele). When you are threshing Kafir corn, let the visitor first take the pestle and help you before you speak to her.

As regards *tree culture*, it was formerly considered a taboo to plant foreign kinds, such as bananas, oranges, etc. When Mboza planted the first mango trees in Morakwen, people told him: "You will die! You have called misfortune on yourself (u tihlolele), and other people will eat your fruit!" I heard this taboo explained in Shiluvane as follows. When a man has been obliged to move, and leaves trees planted by him in his old village, people passing near the ruins shake their heads and say: "Look at those trees! They have chased away the master of the village." These two testimonies are interesting, and fitly illustrate the origin of a taboo. The desolation of a ruin has been connected with the presence of new trees, as they have often been noticed together. Hence the idea that the trees are 245 784 824

245 the cause of the desolation. Planting new trees is consequently
●784 a taboo! Nowadays however, this superstition has died out,
824 and one may see a great number of mango, orange, lemon (1), and pho-pho trees in Thonga fields, on the Coast as well as in Zoutpansberg.

[351] Natives do not generally fence their gardens. Stealing is
685 therefore very easy and it is no wonder that they have recourse to
789 magical means to protect themselves. Here are some of them; they are characteristic instances of Bantu magic.

The *rihehlo*. This consists of a kind of mysterious influence exerted on the thief by throwing a magical powder into his footprints or by taking a little of the earth found in these footprints and treating it with the drugs. The inhabitants of the village where the thief lives will be seized by disease; this will induce them to come to the owners of the garden to confess their fault and pay a fine. Then the magician who had furnished the drug will give them a counter-drug and they will be healed! Amongst the Pedis, the magician anoints with his drugs the stem from which a cob has been stolen. Then the thief will feel intolerable suffering in his little finger and come to the village of the people whom he has robbed crying: "I have stolen!" He pays the fine, receives in exchange the counter-drug and the pain ceases! (Spelonken)

The tinhlamalala. This is the name of the central nervules of the leaves of the Hyphaene palm tree. They are like little snakes, very slender, and flexible. To make the resemblance still greater, the owner of a field makes a knot at the extremity of the rod: this represents the head of the snake. Then he looks for the dried skin which has been cast off by a real snake; he reduces this to ashes, makes a powder with these ashes and anoints the rods. He weaves the rods together to form a kind of crown and places it on one of the mealies stems in his garden. When the thief

137 (1) The lemon tree is called mbomu (mu-mi). This seems to be a Native word and the tree also may be indigenous in the country. It grows wild on the banks of the Lower Nkomati to such an extent that there is an island in the river, some distance above Morakwen, which is called Ilha dos Limões, Lemon Island. The lemons are of large size and their rind resembles that of the orange.

137 4) The *ntjopfa* (mu-mi), the wild custard tree, employed to
372 light the sacred fire of nyokwekulu (I. p. 388). It is taboo to use it for ordinary purposes, or to warm oneself at its embers. Medicine-men alone are allowed to make ntjopfa fire, having drugs to prevent the disease caused by its use.

372 Dealing with fire taboos, I may add that it is taboo to use
784 branches of a tree which has been struck by lightning ; taboo also to keep alight the fire of a deceased person after the conclusion of the great mourning. It must be ritually extinguished (I. p. 135). In case of misfortune also (khombo), if the bones order it, the old fire must be put out and a new fire be lighted on the central fire-place of the first wife by means of the wooden flint. Each woman will go and take an ember from it and start her own fire again. These laws show that in the eyes of the Bantus there is an intimate connection between fire and the life of the village. When death or misfortune contaminates the community, fire is affected also, and it must be destroyed if the village is to resume its normal life.

372 Gungunyana used to levy a tax on fire : he ordered all the
651 fires of his kingdom to be extinguished at a certain time, and sent messengers to relight them by means of embers procured from the royal kraal. Each village had to pay a tax for the new fire. It seems that this kind of royal right was exercised in the old times by the famous Monomotapa king. Nothing of the kind is met with amongst the more modest Thonga chiefs.

372 The manner of producing fire with the wooden flint is as follows. A dry branch of the tree is secured, from half an inch to an inch thick, and cut into two pieces, each of about 18 inches in length ; one half is called the wife (nsati), the other half, the husband (nuna). The first piece, the female, is laid on the ground and a notch is made in it with a knife ; the notch is cut in two movements : first on the upper part of the wood, secondly on the side of it. The male is then somewhat rounded, inserted perpendicularly in the notch, held firmly between the palms of the hands and made to revolve by a rapid motion of the hands from top to bottom. The operator having reached the bottom of

of the bush are also burnt as soon as the grass dries up, so as to obtain fresh grass as early as possible in the spring. In autumn, after the harvest, oxen are allowed to wander about in the gardens, where they eat the mealies and millet and sorghum stems, and find better grass. 231

The Thongas castrate most of their bulls ; however they keep one or two in each herd for breeding purposes. Strange to say, these beasts are generally very tame ; they are hardly any wilder than the castrated oxen. However, the boys sharpen their horns and excite the bulls of different herds to fight. They pour live ants on their foreheads to irritate them. They give them names ; e. g. Makonyama, the one who threatens on both sides, — Mombomakhele, the one who has curly hair on his head, the terrible one, — Ntlhontlha-ba-tsha, shisa-sha-munga, the one who beats the fire... people are burnt by the sparks as by embers of the mimosa tree, — Mabala-ya-tilo, the "stripes of heaven," — Mabata-bata, the one with many spots, etc. Many of these names are suggested by the colouring of the animals (1). I never heard songs in praise of the cattle similar to those found amongst the Ba-Sutho for instance. It does not seem that oxen have at any time played such an important part in the tribal life of the Thongas as is the case amongst Zulus or Suthos. 231 552

Women, especially those of childbearing age and having sexual relations, are not allowed to take care of oxen. It is taboo. When they require dung to smear the huts, they send little children or girls whose menses have not yet begun or who are at any rate unmarried, to fetch it from the oxen kraal. When oxen are sick, they are entrusted to the care of little girls, who must sometimes stay with them as long as two months without returning home. We have already met with these feminine taboos concerning oxen (I. p. 184) and seen that these prohibitions are based on the idea that the menstrual blood is as dangerous for oxen as for 231 562 841 784

(1) Native cattle are by no means of pure breed. There are many races which have been crossed : a small race with short horns and another with large lyre-shaped horns, probably brought from the Transvaal to the coast of Delagoa Bay. Madagascar oxen, with their strange prominence on the back, resembling zebus, have also been imported in great numbers into Lourenço Marques for butcher's purposes. Possibly some have been used for breeding.

231 562 841 784 men having relations with women during menstruation (I. p. 187). Should a drop of it fall in the cattle kraal, this would endanger the health of the whole herd. Women are even prohibited from passing through a herd of oxen ; they must go round it, because otherwise the death of the calves would ensue. Amongst the Ba-Ngoni this taboo is so strong that a woman guilty of having transgressed against it was put to death (1).

231 262 556 The object of oxen-breeding is not milk but the acquisition of *wealth* ; oxen mean wealth to the Native, a means of purchasing girls and of thus increasing his family. Oxen are also bred for food, the meat being highly appreciated and divided amongst all the members of the family according to the strict rules previously explained (I. p. 329). The slaughtering is done by piercing the heart with an assagai, a painful and sometimes very protracted operation. This occurs at marriage feasts, at other family and national gatherings, at the sacrifice for rain (Part VI), and on special occasions, once a year for instance, when a headman wishes to feast his people. All, even neighbours who are not relatives and travellers, are welcome to the feast. Natives have wonderful olfactory powers. They seem to smell out the *lisuna*, viz., the peculiar odour of the meat, a mile off, and when an ox has been killed you see them emerging from the bush on all sides!

234 As regards *milk*, it certainly plays a part in the food of villages which are fortunate enough to possess a well-filled oxen kraal. The *milking* of the cows presents difficulties unknown in Europe! African cows have not yet learned to submit tamely to this operation! The calf must always be allowed to suck a few mouthfuls, then a boy pulls it away from the teat and the cow consents to be milked. Should a cow be too wild, they pass a string through its

241 462 (1) We meet here with an interesting instance of a superstition having no scientific basis whatever, which is nevertheless productive of good results. Women must keep apart from oxen. Since the plough was introduced amongst South African Natives, they have been quick to notice that it is a very useful instrument, and have adopted it in many places. The plough has to be drawn by oxen and men alone are allowed to drive them. Thus women are relieved of the heavy work of tilling the fields which had been allotted to them by immemorial custom. It is probable that further knowledge will free the Natives from their old fear and from the taboo which resulted from it ; yet the idea that everything connected with oxen belongs to the domain of man will remain and thus real social progress will have been obtained through an absurd superstition !

224 554 791 dance over the carcase of his victim! Another was Mubandane, a relation of Mboza, who lived in Nondwana. As is customary with many Natives of the neighbourhood of Lourenço Marques, he hunted elephants for a Portuguese trader, named Fonseca, who provided him with guns and powder. When ready to undertake his hunting trip to the north of Gazaland (Mosapa), he had to undergo a purification (hlambo). His medicine-man cooked a pot full of his drugs, washed him with the froth and poured the contents of the pot on the roof, over the entrance of the hunter's hut. Mubandane had then to stoop and enter his hut, the water leaking through the grass and falling on his shoulders. These words were pronounced by the medicine-man, during this ritual entry into the hut: "Go and be happy! Though the rain fall on you, though the dew make you wet, when you sleep, you will be everywhere as in a hut; everywhere it will be like home (kaya). You will have taken your hut with you, you will enter it in a wet state!"

224 784 Other maphisa were the hippopotamus hunters settled on the banks of the Nkomati river, whose customs I shall describe later on.

In connection with their *hunting trips*, these professional hunters are subject to many taboos. As we have just seen, they must undergo a purification before starting, and also be inoculated in the wrists with special drugs, the most important being those of the tintebe (I. p. 479) the same which are used by the slayers of enemies in battle. Another favourite medicine for hunters is made from the piece of meat which is found between the heart and the lungs of big animals. In some cases they have to prepare themselves for their expedition by daily ablutions and by absolute continence for a certain number of days. The sacrifice of a fowl is also sometimes made before starting. It is taboo for adults to eat the meat of this fowl; it might endanger the success of the expedition. Little children may eat it: "they are quiet" (i. e. they have no sexual relations), and so the hunting will not be spoilt. When all these preparations are finished, the hunters start with their rattles, singing special songs, the songs of the hunters (Part V).

The trip itself may last for months, and constitutes a kind of

marginal period during which the maphisa must use protective medicines against the dangers of the bush, and keep certain rules. 224 784

As a protection they carry their charms, especially the *ndjao*, the root of a certain juncus which is used on many other occasions. As regards the taboos which they must observe, I will first mention those applying to travellers in general, especially the *salt taboo* (I. p. 339). Should they take salt with them, this would "precede them" (rangela), and they would kill no game. It will be soon enough to look for salt when they have killed. But the great taboo of these hunting trips is the *sexual taboo*. This was already imposed before starting and it must be observed Phroughout the expedition. The necessity of avoiding anything connected with sexual relations is so great that maphisa will take with them to cook their food little boys under marriageable age. What is the reason of this prohibition? I have explained it in dealing with the Thonga idea of sexual relations (I. p. 189). If the hunters transgress the law, the big animals will be so wild that it will be impossible to approach them ; they will furiously attack the men who have sinned, because they know them, and woe upon them! So much so that if the hunters see an elephant or a hippopotamus in obstinate pursuit of one of their number, they will begin to insult him for having spoilt the whole trip by his misbehaviour, and send him home. 224 784 834 825

The law of continence is also binding on *the hunters' wives* at home. It is true that when the absence of their husbands is prolonged for a very long time they may become unfaithful to them and the men, on their return, will find babies waiting for them which are not their true children. This will cause them no unhappiness, as these babies none the less belong to them, their wives having been duly bought, and the time for fear is now passed, as they have returned home safely. The fact that these men welcome the children born during their absence caused me to think that hunters' wives were not subject to the sexual taboo as their husbands are. But further inquiry has shown that this is not true. Old Makhani assured me that incontinence on the part of the wife at home would have as a consequence that the husband would be attacked and killed by wild beasts far away in the desert. 224 784 837 851 752

224 784 These women must moreover observe certain rules in their everyday life. They must smear the floor of their huts only early in the morning or late in the evening, viz. at that time of day when their husbands are not busy hunting ; then all will go well with them. Thus the behaviour of the wife has its effect on her husband's fate. Sometimes she will take a plate, fill it with attractive food, call her children and distribute it to them in order that the husband, when passing through the villages in the far-distant country may be well treated by the inhabitants of the land. Should a death occur in the hunter's village during his absence, it is very dangerous for him! It was for this reason that Makhani was attacked by a buffalo which injured his skull! Those at home must expose themselves to vapour baths (mahungulo, I. p. 145) in the early morning and late in the evening, as in the case of smearing the hut.

The aim of these practices is in the first place to protect the hunter against the fury of wild animals ; but it is also to make him a man of the bush through and through. Mboza said : "The hunter must forget everything about home. Were he to have relations with women, his charms would get heated, whilst they must remain cool (titimeta). He must himself become a man of the bush (wa nhoba), similar to the animals which are found there. In this way, they will not fear him, nor will he fear them. If he sees a lion devouring an antelope, he will dare to approach it, kneel before it, clasp his hands and say : 'You, lion! give me some meat, that I may eat ; I am hungry!' The lion goes slowly away and leaves the antelope to him!" When they have killed enough game, the maphisa cut the meat into strips, which they take home. When they return they stop at the main entrance of the village. The headman comes to them, greets them and offers a hen in sacrifice on their behalf, to thank his ancestor-gods for having saved them from death. Should one of them have died during the journey, they fire a volley on arrival and are not allowed to enter before having undergone the purification rites.

Hunters must not give meat to eat to people "who are bad" (la'ba bihiki), i. e. to their wife just after a birth, to women during

menstruation, to persons in a state of defilement. This would "spoil their gun." When they go to attend the burial of a relative, they fire a shot upon reaching the mortuary village. Thus the ball which was in the gun at the time of the relative's death will be expelled ; was it not contaminated? Moreover the hunter will wash his gun ; without these precautions the weapon would not kill anything in future. 224 784

These maphisa are very jealous of each other. Some of them try to destroy the power of a rival by securing a part of an animal killed by him ; they subject the meat to a treatment which was not explained to me ; they then bury for instance a bone thus smeared ; after which they are convinced that their rival will no longer be able to dispute game with them. Therefore when a hunter distributes meat to other people, he keeps for himself a little piece of each limb in order to prevent a possible enemy from "going away with his meat." 224 789

Let me now pass in review the *more important kinds of big game*, and I will reproduce as literally as possible the information gathered from Thongas of all parts of the country with regard to each of them. Some of my readers, upon reading these extraordinary statements, will no doubt exclaim: "What does all this mean? Are these actual facts or pure imagination or folklore?" All three elements are certainly represented in these stories, but I think it would be useless to take much trouble to distinguish between the three. My endeavour is not to produce a scientific zoological treatise but to find in these accounts a means of penetrating more deeply into Bantu mentality ; and there is no doubt that the study of hunting rites has a great deal to teach us on this subject. 224

The *eland* (*mhofu*, Oreas canna) is a splendid beast, highly coveted but dangerous to kill. Viguet says : "It possesses the *nuru*. When you kill it, it is taboo to walk round its body. Go straight to its head, and there, in the hair of the forehead, you will find a louse ; take it. Then dig in the earth where the head has fallen : you will find a root tehre ; cut it off and bring it home together with the louse. Then you are safe!" (—Other people add : "Remove its eye before cutting it open, if you wish to escape the 224 825

immediately after these acts, he sets off with his sons ; they close 224
the drift where the beasts leave the river by placing a canoe across the track. The hippopotami are in the neighbouring forest, busy feeding, and perhaps ravaging the fields. When they return to the river, they stop in front of the canoe which obstructs their retreat : the first assagai is then thrown at them. It has been smeared over with the Strophantus powder. The animal rushes into the water ; when it reappears on the other side, it is pierced by a second assagai. These assagais are arranged in such a way that the blade, which is provided with hooks at the sides, is not firmly fixed to the handle ; moreover a long string is twined round the handle connecting it with the blade. So, when the hippopotamus enters the river, the assagai which is planted in its skin is separated from the handle, which remains floating and acts as a buoy ; the string unwinds and the handle follows the animal as it retreats, showing in which direction it has gone.

As soon as the assagai is thrown, somebody runs to the hunter's 224
village to inform his wife. The woman must at once shut herself 784
up in the hut and remain perfectly quiet. She lights a fire and 789
keeps it burning the whole time. A little child brings her her pipe
(old Ronga women are great pipe smokers). She must neither [276]
eat nor drink ; or, if she is very thirsty, the child will bring her some water. In any case she must not crush her mealies; she must not go out of the hut except to satisfy her natural wants. Why ? Because if she were to move to and fro in the village, this would induce the hippopotamus to rush wildly upon her husband and possibly kill him. Moreover the fact that she remains confined within the circular walls of the hut will have as a consequence that the wild beast will be in some sort imprisoned in a small space ; it will not be able to run far away and escape.

We find here a characteristic instance of the two kinds of magic which we shall explain later on : the communionist magic according to which the different parts of a whole act and react on each other (the great wife, whose life is in close connection with her husband's life, saves him by her quiet demeanour) and the imitative magic according to which like acts on like or produces like (the confinement of the woman within the

walls of the hut prevents the hippopotamus from escaping from the circle formed by the canoes on the river. (Similar customs are found amongst many primitive peoples. See Part VI. Ch. I.)

Then all the hunters of the village are called ; they enter the canoe and follow the beast. To facilitate the pursuit, they replace the floating handle of the assagai by a *male*, viz., the big nervule of the leaf of the mimale palm tree, resembling a pole of 30 feet in length. As soon as this species of pole is fixed, somebody informs the woman at home that she can come out of the hut. But let her be prudent, as victory is not yet won. The hippopotamus will come to the surface to breathe : an assagai will be thrown into its nostrils and later a second ; it will be no longer able to close its nose when plunging and will be drowned. But it may attack the hunters furiously, instigated by the spirits of baloyi (wizards) which are riding on it "just as men ride on a horse!" The fight will perhaps last a long time!

When the hippopotamus has at last been killed, songs of rejoicing burst out on all sides ; the hunters bring their canoes together and row in the direction of the village, singing the whole time special songs which are called *nyangamela*. The peculiar cries of the women are heard on the hill, their "mikulungwana." They come to the shore to meet the men. The great wife, having now been entirely set free, comes dancing and singing. The carcase is left on the sand till low tide (the tide is perceptible for a long distance in the Lower Nkomati river). Then all the hunters assemble to proceed to the two great hunters' rites, the lurulula and the luma.

First the *lurulula*. I have obtained a more precise description of this rite from two new informants. The beast is laid on its back, and its forelegs are pulled out on both sides, so as to separate them from each other. The hunter who has killed the beast takes his *ndjao* root, chews it, together with the butimba medicine, blows pieces of it into his hands, closes his eyes and introduces himself, creeping on his belly, between the forelegs ; he then creeps along the side of the hippopotamus, anointing it with the medicine which is in his hands. When he reaches the hindleg, he squeezes it with both hands, does the same to the other hindleg, creeps

totems, and do not exclude certain meats from their diet on account of totemic fears. But they proclaim as taboo some animals: amongst them four kinds of birds, the hawk, the vulture, the crow and the stork, because they are used by magicians to prepare powerful charms; the toad, because when teased its "urine" (murundju) oozes out and is dangerous, causing itch, as is generally believed; a kind of Tenebrionida beetle (Psammodes Bertoloni), called *shifufunu sha paripari*, because it strikes the ground with its abdomen, making a noise represented by the word *baribarr*. I could not discover the particular danger feared by the Natives in connection with this beetle, but there must be one; hence the yila. We have already met with the special feminine taboos as regards food (I. p. 183). Women abstain from certain animals, or parts of animals, fearing an evil effect on parturition. Amongst the Nkunas, women are also afraid of the meat of the leopard, the civet-cat, of any animal with paws (psa marubo); they only eat animals which have hoofs (psa masondjo). "The former are wild beasts, things of the hubo (I. p. 311), with a bad smell, food for men" (Mankhelu).

The comparison of *nyenyá* and *yila* is interesting, as it may help to explain the origin of certain taboos, which is a very important subject indeed. The nyenya is the feeling of disgust which induces a person to abstain from a given food; in the yila there is, in addition, the dread of a supposed danger connected with the consumption of this food. Thus there is a great difference between the two: the idea of danger does not exist in the nyenya. However, it is quite possible that what was merely a nyenya has evolved, in the course of time, into a real yila or taboo, in which the disgust is no longer the mere individual repulsion for a distasteful food, but has become a social matter, a characteristic custom of a clan, or of a group.

Let me quote two instances which came under my personal notice. Amongst my servants was a young man belonging to the Ngoni clan. The Ba-Ngoni, being of Zulu origin, do not eat fish. Sometimes the cook put shrimps into the ground nut sauce: this was a treat to all the boys, as they are very fond of shrimps and the addition greatly improved the flavour of the dish. But our Ngoni boy, having smelt the "lisuna," used to inquire about the sauce, and if he heard that there

262 were shrimps in it, he disdainfully refused to take his share. — "We
784 are Ba-Ngoni! We do not eat fish," he said with disgust. First, shrimps are not fish ; he was "plus royaliste que le roi!" Second, he did not abstain from the sauce because it had an unpleasant flavour ; it was more tasty than ever! But the *social idea* dictated his attitude. He boasted of belonging to a superior race. He was not like these wretched Ba-Thonga who eat fish! It would be lowering himself to partake of such a meal, so he preferred to fast.

I witnessed the same scene when we were distributing cakes to our school children in Lourenço Marques. One of the girls was the daughter of a pure Ronga woman and an Indian Mussulman. She inquired if the cakes had been cooked with lard. The cakes were excellent, and she found them so, nevertheless she refused to eat them if they contained lard, because her father was not allowed to eat pork. It is evident that there is but one step from this clan repulsion, which is still a nyenya, to a definite taboo. Let the boy or girl *fear* that some evil will happen to them, because they have transgressed a sacred rule, and the nyenya will become a yila. Let it be admitted by them that the transgression of the rule may bring death to the family or the clan, and the primitive individual feeling of disgust will be transformed into the most severe collective taboo. I can quote no instance in proof of this evolution, as we have no knowledge of the past history of the taboos. From the psychological point of view, however, this process is quite within the range of possibility.

III. *Fishing.*

226 There are no particular restrictions to fishing so long as it is
821 carried on by *hooks*. Any one can go with his boat on the river, the lake, or the sea, and throw his line into the water. The fisherman will then say : "Thu! (not the sacramental tsu, but only an onomatopœia describing the fall of the hook into the water). You! my hook! they eat to their heart's content, people who dwell yonder, where they pound their mealies kneeling down (bugimamusi), there where the khwekhwe and the mhulu are, etc. (names of different kinds of fish)." Afterwards the fisher throws a pinch of tobacco on the spot where his hook

fell, not as an offering to the gods, but in order to help his hook to see (hanyanyisa), to awaken it and "give it eyes to catch." This sentence referring to the place "where people pound their mealies standing, or kneeling down," is an allusion to a curious cosmographic notion, which we shall explain later on (Part VI. Chap. I). Seeing the sky reflected in the water, the fisherman thinks of the ends of the earth, where heaven rests on the ground, and where women are obliged to kneel down when crushing their mealies, lest their pestles hit the sky!

There are three other principal methods of fishing, and, as they are more or less of a collective nature, they are regulated by laws and attended with taboos : the nhangu, the shibaba and the tjeba.

The *nhangu* is a triangular enclosure made of sticks stuck in the sand on the seashore. This enclosure has an opening looking seaward. The tide covers the nhangu, bringing with it all kinds of denizens of the sea, big lobsters, shrimps of all sizes, fish, etc ; when it retires, all these creatures are imprisoned in the nhangu, and try to find their way out through the opening ; this however is closed, and the fishers collect their catch, which is sometimes considerable. A man who wishes to build a nhangu must pay a tax to the chief of the country. During the operation he must observe the law of silence ; if anyone should speak to him, he must not answer. When the nhangu is ready he goes straight to his hut, and washes his hands, and then he can speak again. Should he transgress this taboo, the fish will rush about wildly in the trap and he will be unable to catch it. This is not a *kunga* proper (I. p. 124) but only another application of the rule imposed for example on the wife of the hippopotamus-hunter (II. p. 69). On the day of inauguration, (khangula), all the inhabitants have the right to come and partake of the result of the first fishing. This is a *luma*, the luma of the nhangu. The owner of the trap is not allowed to take a single fish home that day. Everything must be consumed on the spot.

The *shibaba* is another kind of trap, made of woven reeds, which is placed on the banks of a river, of the Nkomati, for instance, near the sea, within the tidal reach ; when the tide is

342 The *sill* consists simply of a piece of wood (ntjandja wa shipfalo) laid flat on the ground, with one edge raised so that the door cannot be opened outwards. It must always open inwards, doubtless with a view to facilitate the exclusion of unwelcome visitors by the simple expedient of sitting with one's back against
● 784 it. The threshold is not attended with taboos, excepting that of
342 the principal hut of the master of the village, beneath which

The Thonga hut. *Phot. A. Burd.*

protective drugs have been placed at the foundation of his village. It is taboo to sit on it (this may cause disease), but not to tread on
177 it. Most huts are now fitted with padlocks which are, of course,
414 of European origin. The palm wood doors are only seen in the districts where the mimale palm grows.

342 A number of small sticks are stuck in the straw crown at the top of the hut, and certainly add to the picturesque appearance of these constructions. It would seem that they are put there to hinder birds from perching on the huts, and more especially to avoid any chance visit during the night from screech-owls (ma-kuñhunu) and other nocturnal fowl, which might alight on

533 Of course the colonists, who only knew "Kitchen Kafir,"
539 could not understand the complaint of the Nkuna boy!

The *song of the crab* is more tragic! (Tune No. 10). In a deep minor key a man cries for help! He went to hunt the big crabs which dwell in the mud of the mangrove forest, or on the sea-shore. He followed one ; the animal hastily hid itself in its hole. The imprudent hunter tried to catch it there ; he put his arm into the hole and attempted to pull the crab out. But the crustacean seized his finger in its claws so firmly that the man could not get free. He remained tightly held down, fixed to the ground. The tide is rising; soon it will cover him! And he cries :

Yo-o! Lomo tjukeni ku na mani? — Hala yi khomi litiho!
Alas! - On the shore is there some one? — The crab has caught me by the finger!

This is almost dramatic poetry and the scene is worthy of a true literary description.

533 The *erotic style* is cultivated by boys and girls on different
832 occasions though it must be said that love, as we understand it,
539 plays but little part in Thonga life. Boys in love generally express their feelings to the accompaniment of the unicord harp (see Chap. III) in the evening in the neighbourhood of the village of their beloved one ; I have never been able to catch the words of these songs, which are said to be sometimes very long, and are sung in a very loud voice ; they are not precisely chaste, according to one of our Native ministers, who considered that the use of the unicord harp ought to be forbidden to Christian boys! But here is a *love song* probably composed by a girl who was not allowed to marry the boy of her choice :

To-morrow, to-morrow, my mother, I will start,
To-morrow, father, I will start,
I will start with an axe ;
With this axe I will cut the stump,
The stump on which my friend has hurt his leg,
My friend whose belt of tails hangs from his waist,
The one for whom I draw my legs out of the way. (1)

784 (1) Perhaps an allusion to the fact that it is taboo to pass over any one's outstretched
516 legs. She draws in her legs to give him the means of passing and coming to sit beside her.

192 Amongst the Ba-Ronga those[1] which are still known are : *Nhlangula*,
805 the month in which the flowers are swept (hlangula) from the
trees, probably October, when all the minkuhlu, minkanye, etc.,
821 blossom ; *Ñwendjamhala*, the month in which the antelope mhala, brings forth its young (November?) ; *Mawuwana*, when the *tihuhlu* (p. 18) are plucked, because the people shout : "Wuwana! wuwana!" in their joy at having plenty of almonds to suck, corresponds to December. *Hukuri* is said to be the month when the fruits of the *nkwakwa* (p. 17) are ripe (December also?). *Ndjati*, or *ndjata*, viz., I am coming, is the time of *nwebo*, when everyone is in his fields eating the new cobs of mealies, and if you call a person he will answer : "I will come directly! Have patience! I am busy here!" "This may be January or February. *Sunguti* is also one of the summer months. *Sibamesoko*, the moon which closes the paths, also called *Dwebindlela* or *Sibandlela*, is easy to identify : it is February, the time when the grass grows so high that it hides the paths leading to the nkanye trees. This is the end of the bukanye time (I. p. 397). *Nyenyana*, *Nywenywankulu* are the months of the birds (nyanyana), when one spends all one's time in chasing the winged marauders from the fields of sorghum and millet (March. April). *Mudashini*, viz., what am I to eat? is the month when you have harvested so many different kinds of food that you do not know which to choose : this is the time directly after harvest, May or June. *Khotabushika*, viz., when winter comes, probably June or July.

772 The *stars* are called *tinyeleti* (yin-tin) and play a remarkably
821 small part in the ideas of the tribe. The modern theory according to which all religions started from the worship of stars, finds no confirmation at all in the South African Bantu tribes.

821 It is taboo to try to count the stars. If any one attempts
784 to do so people will say to him : "Keep quiet or you will wet the
861 hut during the night!" Counting stars represents the torments of the soul! If a child has been deprived of food as a punishment for an offence, his parents will tell him, when he goes to sleep : "Go and count the stars," viz., "you will feel hungry and not be able to go to sleep ; you will be as unhappy as if you had to count the stars."

[1] [names of moons -- Analyst]

193 conceptions were still current, it was considered as a feminine principle. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that *rivers* (nambu. pl. milambu) also have the feminine termination (I. p. 36, Note). I find the following names of rivers ending in *ti* : Nkomati, Nfoloti (Umbelosi), Ñwebeti, Shalati, Timbati ; the termination *etsi*, *edzi*, may be another form of the same suffix (Ñwanetsi, Ntsatsi, Shingwedzi, Madzi, etc.). A very curious fact, which shows the same conception, is that the river which crosses the territory of the Tembe clan is called Mi-Tembe. I first thought this to be a plural form of the mu-mi class ; but it is more natural to explain this *mi* as the feminine prefix (1) which means daughter of, as Migogwe, etc. (I. p. 352).

823 *Crossing rivers* is subject to a curious rule. It is taboo to bathe
784 in the stream before crossing it ; taboo also for the traveller to
824 cook his food on the hither side of the river ; he must first cross,
789 and then take his meal. This rule is still universally observed by
133 waggon trekkers in South Africa. In this case there may be a reason for the taboo : South African rivers are apt to be swollen in a moment by sudden rain, and the crossing made impossible for days : the traveller therefore makes haste ; he will have plenty of time to stop on the other side! When the river is dangerous, a Thonga will first chew (phora) a little of his *ndjao*, the root of a juncus, which is supposed to increase courage and to ensure victory over hostile influences. (See Part VI.)

823 Some *Lakes* and *Rivers* are believed to be inhabited by spirits,
769 but not in the ordinary fetichistic way, in which a special spiritual
776 being is incorporated with the natural object ; these spirits are
782 *psikwembo*, spirits of the deceased ancestors of the owners of the land, and are propitiated by their descendants. Should another clan have invaded the territory where these lakes are, and crocodiles threaten the fishermen, (p. 88) they will call some one belonging to the clan of the old possessors of the country and ask him to make an offering to appease *his* gods. This is the ordinary course, and the more closely we search the more completely these lake and

(1) A number of river names have the prefix *li* or *ri*, especially those which are of Sutho origin : Lebvubye. Ritabi (Letaba) Ritshindjele (Letsitele), Rimbelule (Lepalula, Olifant). Others begin with *ñwa*, *ma*, and may be ancient names of men.

823 regarding its confines and the shore on the other side. Some
791 magicians claim to have gone and stayed for some time down in the depths : to have "crossed the sea" is for them a kind of diploma, which gives them the right of exercising their art. (See Chapter III.)

823 The *tide* (byaela) is considered to be caused by a whale (nkomu) which alternately swallows and vomits the sea-water : this is the common idea. Some Natives, however, connect it with the moon, having noticed that the tide is higher at full moon and at the wane.

The sea must be feared : it is jealous. "When some one is taken away by the great wave, do not shout! Do not exclaim : 'He is lost!', else you will never see him again. On the contrary, if you say : 'All right, let him go', then the returning wave will bring him back." These are the assertions of Spoon. And old Makhani expressed his approval by nodding his head!

372 "It is the same with *fire*," Spoon also remarked. There was
784 a terrible bush fire in Rikatla on the 18th of September 1908. As always happens at the end of winter, the bush was absolutely dry. A leper woman, tilling her fields, wished to cook a little manioc. The fire leapt to the weeds which she had gathered and from these to the bush. Two huts were burnt. "It is their own fault," said Spoon, "when the bush fire comes you must put it out quietly. If you make any noise, if you shout, it comes straight at you. That is what happened. In the first village people fought calmly and succeeded in saving their huts. At Jeck's village, they cried out. The fire leapt on to a hut, the small hut of the son. The mother cried : 'Yo! yo! Where shall I put my child?' She went on crying out until the hut was burnt to the ground. So the fire leapt on to the big hut and burnt it. She has only herself to blame!" (1)

823 The origin of *stones* is absolutely unknown. Pikinini, a Nkuna boy, who was endowed with an extraordinary imagination, once drew my attention to the stratification of a large dolomite boulder on which different concentric layers were visible, and said to me :

[521] (1) Silence is always recommended to prevent misfortune : in the case of war (I, p. 470) women at home must keep silent ; likewise when the husband is hunting hippopotami (p. 69), when a child is seized with convulsions owing to the power of *tilo* (heaven). See also my remarks on the kunga rite. (I. p. 124).

The Gods of the Bush, Psikwembu psa Nhoba, are also especially dreaded. There is a little song which is sung as a welcome to travellers who reach their home safely :

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Shikwembu sha nhoba shi etlele !
Shi etlele, banhwanyana !
Amadikeo-dikeo-dikeo !
The god of the bush has remained asleep !
He has remained asleep, young girls !
Hurrah ! hurrah ! hurrah !

The spirits of the departed who wander about in the bush, not having been properly buried, try to attack innocent travellers. You are fortunate to escape their anger ! For this reason they often say to a relative who is starting out on a journey : "Go with your god," viz., the special ancestor-god who can protect you against the dangers of the bush.

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I have also heard mention of *Shikwembu sha tihanye*, the god of quarrels. When an offering prescribed by the bones and presented to a certain ancestor-god has not had the desired result, people say : "This god is a god of quarrels. Let us make an offering to the others so that they may scold him."

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3) The Abode of the Ancestor-Gods and their Mode of Life.

Ideas on these two points are very confused, even contradictory. Some say that the departed go to a great village *under the earth*, a village where everything is white (or pure, "ku basa") ; there they till the fields, reap great harvests, and live in abundance, and they take of this abundance to give to their descendants on earth. They have also a great many cattle. The place where they live seems to be a kind of Hades or Paradise (1). But it would seem, when we consider the funeral rites, that the deceased, on the contrary,

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(1) The Ba-lla (see Smith and Dale, *The Ila-speaking people*, II p. 119) believe that the ghosts go *Kwiwe*, to the East, to Chilenga, the Creator. But they have the same contradictory ideas as the Thongas concerning the abode of their deceased ancestors.

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Amongst the Natives of Barotseland, on the Zambezi, it is said that the dead go to Nyambe, the God of Heaven. They pierce the lobe of their ears and make other incisions in their bodies as a sign that they belong to Nyambe. When they die and reach the end of the earth at the great river Walamba (the Styx of the Zambezian tribes) the ferryman who conveys the dead to the other bank looks at them to see if

alone (See *Les Ba-Ronga*, p. 414). He pours his drugs into one of the pots brought by the women, adds to them the psanyi of the goat sacrificed for the occasion, and pours all the contents on to the shoulders of the mother, who holds the babes in her lap. After this he pours from some other pot, which contains pure water, and the woman conscientiously washes herself and her children all the while. Until her purification no inhabitant of the village is allowed to eat anything, and the following day it is taboo to work in the fields, for this would prevent the rain from falling. 845 756 783

Amongst the *Nkunas*, the mother of twins sits at the entrance of the hut, and the drug is poured over the roof above the doorway; it leaks through the thatch on to her, and thus both the mother and the hut are purified at the same time.

This preliminary purification being thus accomplished, the woman goes to live in "her shelter," outside the village. She is absolutely shut off from all the other inhabitants. She has her own pots, axe, mortar, pestle, and does all her own cooking. Nobody even pays her a visit, and people only speak to her from a distance. Her children see no one but her. To each is allotted one breast, always the same. To help her in the nursing of twins the mother must "buy" a girl, to whom the care of one of the children is committed. This is a law. It is taboo for a girl, even should she be the elder sister, to "play" with a twin. The payment of £ 1 or ten shillings removes this taboo and the defilement (shisila) connected with it. 845 853 [671] [784]

Women fear that, if they touch anything belonging to the mother of twins, if they smear themselves with her provision of fat, or if the defiled one smears herself with their fat, they will also incur the dreadful misfortune of giving birth to twins. For this reason it is taboo for a mother of twins to draw water except at a certain spot. She must select one place and always go there. When she returns from drawing water, she must pay attention to the little wreath of grass which she wears on her head to help her balance her pot; it must not be thrown away with those used by other women, for fear that they also should become contaminated (tekela). 845 784

751 the disease, and it is the *batukulu* of the chief, his nephews, the sons of his sisters, who are sent to procure it. Are they not the favourites of their maternal uncle? (I. p. 222). Nobody could suspect them of bringing misfortune into the village of their *bakokwana*! The particular ntukulu who must render this service to the country is designated by the bones. The bones also indicate the village of the neighbouring clan to which he must go to fetch the virus. The serous fluid is taken from old people or from children, who have no sexual intercourse ; we already know the reason for this. The ntukulu inoculates himself and his comrades and returns home ; when their pustules are ripe, they inoculate all the members of the clan who have not yet suffered
● [784] from the disease.[1] From this day begins for the whole clan a distinct marginal period, with all the taboos accompanying the critical phases of the life of the community. No one is allowed to wash his body. Absolute continence is imposed on all. Salt is prohibited, as it is said to make the blood flow more quickly in the body and it may cause the wounds to become sore.

164 But in addition to the ordinary taboos, some other measures are
751 taken which are dictated by the special nature of small-pox. This
755 disease, amongst Black people, manifests itself in two forms, which may be called the white and the black. The former is much milder than the latter. In it the pustules are large, superficial, scattered all over the body and well separated from each other ; the skin is discoloured over them and becomes whitish ; they soon dry up and do not leave deep marks. In the second form, which is the confluent and haemorrhagic type of the disease, the pustules are small, black, continuous with each other, and full of blood ; they soon discharge a nasty fluid ; fever is high and death may intervene.
751 The whole aim of the treatment is to promote the mild, white form
755 of small-pox and to prevent the black form. It is therefore taboo to eat any meat containing blood, which is black and must therefore be avoided. On the contrary, fish meat is allowed, because it is white and contains no dark blood. Another device of Native doctors to obtain this result is to place before the eyes of their patients grains of mealies, which are white like the desired pustules and are also similar to them in form, and to prevent their

[1] [Small-pox--analyst]

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

p. 573

CHAPTER IV

Taboo and Morality.

If we take the trouble to make a careful study of the life of so-called savages, we very soon notice that, instead of being free from all law and restraint, as superficial observers believe, their life is, on the contrary, subject to a great number of rules and prohibitions, by which primitive man is held captive in the bonds of custom and tradition. These prohibitions are of two principal kinds. Those which are most obvious are *the taboos*, which we have met with on each page of these two volumes. They play an immense part in the behaviour of the raw Native. But, in addition to these, there are other restraints which seem to spring from a totally different set of ideas, *the moral principles*. The relation between the taboo and moral notions is very difficult to determine. It is at the present time one of the most debated questions of Anthropology ; I shall try to show what the state of things is in that phase of human development to which the Thongas of South Africa have attained.

A. THE TABOO.

I ventured to give a provisional definition of the *yila*, or *taboo*, of the Thongas, when we met with the first interdiction of this type, Vol. I. page 37 : "Any object, act, or person that implies a danger for the individual or for the community, and that must consequently be avoided, this object, act or person being under a kind of ban." After explaining hundreds of taboos, I do not feel that this definition needs any alteration. Its main element is this :

784 the object, act or person tabooed constitutes a danger (1) ; it must therefore be avoided.

I. *Classification of Taboos.*

Let us now sum up our study of taboos by attempting to classify them.

The most primitive of all are those which are called by Modern Ethnographers *the sympathetic taboos*, those which man instinctively observes in order to preserve his life and avoid suffering. To touch a burning ember or a fire, is taboo. Thongas sometimes use the word yila for such prohibitions : they say for instance "psa yila" for a little child to play with a knife. But this category of taboos, which impose themselves on man with a certain self-evidence, play no special part in Thonga customs.

1) The first category on which I would dwell is that of the *physiological taboos.*

a) First, those connected with *defilement*. When dealing with physiological ideas (p. 357), we noticed that there were five or six physiological phenomena which are considered to be attended with special danger, because they are the great [illegible]*ts of defilement* : the menstrual flow, the lochia, disease, death and the birth of twins. Those who have been defiled by one or other of these agencies are taboo ; they are subject to a number of interdictions, in order that fatal contagion may be avoided ; in most cases, they have to pass through a marginal period, at the end of which they are again received into society. Hence a great many taboos, which I would call the *physiological taboos proper*. The *sexual taboos*, and the *special feminine taboos* (I. p. 184) naturally belong to this category, in which I would also include the *military taboos* in connection with the slayers (I. p. 478), and those underlying the strange *hunting rites* (p. 77), as all these seem to proceed from the

(1) The word *yila* very closely corresponds to the term taboo so widely used in Anthropology. In current speech it is sometimes employed in a wider sense, in cases where the notion of danger is not clearly present, but this is certainly an extension of the meaning. In fact the *yila proper* exactly answers to the definition just given.

idea of defilement through death. *Adultery* is taboo because the husband fears "the bad bloods" by which his wife may have been contaminated through her misconduct. In as far as respect for the *totem* is considered necessary for the maintenance of the health of the clansman, I would also include the taboos of this order in the physiological category ; these are, however, very few in number amongst the Thongas (I. p. 366). 784

b) Another variety of the same category are *the taboos connected with growth* or *change of condition*, or *with the various initiations* through which a Native may be called on to pass. The whole life of primitive man consists, as has already been stated, in a succession of stages ; he must proceed from one to the other through ceremonies in connection with which a number of taboos are to be noticed. The individual who ascends from an inferior stage to a superior one, always passes through a marginal period by which he is separated from the former and received into the latter. In this case the seclusion is not due to defilement properly speaking ; it is connected with the idea of *growth*. Hence the taboos of *tying the cotton string*, (I. p. 56), *weaning* (I. p. 58), when passing from infancy to childhood, *puberty*, when entering upon adult life through circumcision, *marriage* (p. 124), when being received into the group of married people ; initiation into the society of the possessed, and into the profession of magician, or diviner, is attended with similar taboos. 561 784

All the taboos of this category seem to have been actuated by the idea of danger accompanying ritual impurity, or passage from one condition to another.

2) A second category of taboos, much less numerous, are the *cosmic taboos*. Nature prohibits certain acts ; if they are committed, rain will not fall, and the community will suffer. The prohibition of cutting the roots at the new moon (p. 306), of tilling the fields when a shower falls in the morning (p. 28), of warming oneself at a fire of parasitic plants and at the ntjhopfa (p. 18), and some agricultural taboos belong to this category. Some of the most severe physiological taboos, those connected with twins and with unlawfully buried children, become cosmic, inasmuch as they prevent rain from falling (p. 317). 821 784

784 3) A third kind of taboos are those I call *taboos of prevision*. Foresight is dangerous on certain occasions : Do not build your hut before you are married! (I. p. 251). Do not prepare the ntehe before the birth of your child (I. p. 46), nor your ngula basket before harvest! The travellers' taboos (I. p. 339) might also be included in this class.

4) A fourth category comprises the manifold *social taboos, viz.*, those actions which are prohibited because they would be dangerous to the social order. Exogamous laws (I. p. 256), hlonipha customs, viz., the tabooing of certain words by the chief (I. p. 384), and especially the curious taboos to be observed in the intercourse of allied families (I. p. 250), are social. The taboos connected with the moving of a village (I. p. 320) are physiological in so far as they are actuated by the fear of defilement, and social in so far as they aim at maintaining the life of the social organism, which is the *muti*. But those which chiefly bear the character of social taboos are those connected with the idea of *hierarchy*. We have met with them in the ceremonies of the first fruits (1) (I. p. 394) and in the rules of sowing: It is taboo to "precede" a chief or an elder brother in agricultural operations, sowing or harvesting!

5) This leads us to a fifth category : the *religious taboos*. The ancestor-gods, being the elders of the actual members of the family, must be treated as hierarchically superior ; hence the religious taboo of luma : the interdiction of eating the new crop before having presented the gods with the first fruits ; the prohibition of infringing the sacerdotal rights of an elder brother (p. 398) is a taboo of the same kind. We here observe the intimate connection between social and religious life in Ancestrolatry. Forgetfulness in fulfilling duties towards the gods (p. 426), and killing green snakes (p. 384) are also religious taboos.

195 784 6) I include in a sixth category the *language taboos*, ku rukatela, viz., the use of obscene expressions not allowed in ordinary life.

(1) The *luma* taboos are social and religious; but they also belong to the first variety of physiological taboos in so far as they are actuated by the fear of defilement (food of a deceased person, Vol. I. p. 146) ; to the second variety in so far as they are connected with a change of condition : first use of a new crop (I. p. 394), of a new meat (p. 71), of a new implement (p. 117), or fishing trap (p. 85). (Notice the relation between khangela , to inaugurate, and luma).

2: Junod M-5 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

The words designating the sexual act and the various parts of the genital organs are *yila*; but there are substitutes for them, euphemisms which may be used in their stead. When a child employs such words, people scold him, and say to him : "Psa yila! Do you think we are cleaning the wells?" This remark is due to the fact that the language taboos are suspended during the marginal periods and especially during the "mourning of the land," when the rains are delayed and people try to cause them to fall by the rite of cleaning the wells (p. 318). The language taboos are related to the social taboos ; to use obscene words leads to the destruction of social order, and this is allowed only when that order is actually destroyed, for instance during the mbelele rite (p. 318), during the time of moving the village (I. p. 321), and during mourning ceremonies (I. p. 160).

These six categories, although they are not absolutely distinct, form a convenient method of classifying the taboos.

II. *Some remarks on the taboos.*

1) What is the *origin of taboos*? It is not impossible to trace it in a number of cases. The *hlonipha taboos*, for instance, are proclaimed by the chiefs under certain special circumstances (I. p. 384). The taboo concerning *the planting of new fruit trees* is explained by the coincidence of the desolation of a ruined village with the presence of such trees (p. 29). Such coincidences, amounting to bad omens, have no doubt given birth to numerous taboos. If misfortune has followed a certain act two or three times, a hasty generalisation is made by the primitive mind : post hoc ergo propter hoc! So the act is tabooed.

This is due to the fact that with primitive people, as with children, *the emotional element predominates over the rational*, and when unfortunate events have happened or are feared, disease, drought, death, when the mind is in a state of terror, anxiety, or merely of nervous expectation, the reasoning faculties are disturbed, and a distinctive mental phenomenon shows itself, called by the French philosopher Renouvier the *intellectual vertigo* (le

784 vertige intellectuel). Prof. Raoul Allier, in his valuable book on
152 *La Psychologie de la Conversion chez les peuples non civilisés* (Vol. I. p. 250-260), ably describes the psychological process which takes place in the soul of the savage. Suppose some event to have happened which has caused a deep emotion in the tribe, the arrival for instance of the first Europeans with a number of unknown objects which arouse fear in the Native population. This emotion may perhaps subside and eventually be forgotten, and the tribe will accustom itself to the presence of the new comers ; but if some great misfortune supervenes, for instance if a serious epidemic breaks out, a new emotion will be produced throughout the country. This will remind the people of the emotion previously experienced on the arrival of the Europeans, and, in the disturbed state of mind thus created, the association established between the two emotions will be extended to the two facts which gave birth to these emotions, and the tribe will declare that the first fact is the cause of the second. Europeans and everything they brought with them will henceforth be considered as taboo. This is utterly illogical and the conclusion absurd. Yet this is what actually happens amongst people whose reasoning faculties are but little developed. These observations help us greatly in our understanding of primitive mentality, and many taboos may be psychologically explained in this way. Most of them, however, are inexplicable. They originate in the animistic or dynamistic collective representations of the tribe (p. 368) and these representations are instinctive, unconscious and consequently unaccountable.

784 2) How are they *enforced?* In as far as taboos have been
626 proclaimed by conscious agents, their transgression will meet
753 with punishment by those agents. A chief will sue a subject using a hlonipha word. The gods will punish those who transgress the law of hierarchy, who pass all bounds in incontinence, who forget their duties towards them (p. 426). But, in most cases, the decree is not enforced by a conscious agent. The *taboo avenges itself directly*. Consumption, swelling of the legs, the impossibility of passing water, disease of one kind or another will follow the transgression, or the children will be covered with an eruption of pimples.

3) How are taboos *dealt with?* 784

Happily the danger of taboos can be removed, otherwise life would be almost impossible! The medicine-men have the 789 necessary drugs to protect their poor fellow-men against the misfortune (khombo) which is always threatening them! Is not the whole arsenal of magic at their disposal? Rites in great numbers provide the necessary protection, especially the *luma rite*, which is the proper method of avoiding the special dangers connected with the *first use* of anything. The wish to obtain protection against all these dangers explains the immense influence of the medicine-men, of those who know the preventive drugs to be used against defilement and misfortune.

It is impossible to attain to a true knowledge of the taboos 784 without studying the laws of *their suspension*. Taboos are sometimes suspended. The chief, for instance, is above them, at any rate above some of them, being himself a magical being, a tabooed personage (I. p. 382). The collectivity has a still greater power over them and can cancel them. There are times when all these prohibitions, or at least some of them, are withdrawn; these are the marginal periods, when we behold the strange spectacle that ordinary taboos are suspended (language taboos, relatives-in-law taboos), whilst others are enforced (sexual taboos). I have often drawn attention to this curious phenomenon.

B. MORAL RESTRAINTS.

But taboos are not the only kind of restraint to which primitive 183 Bantus submit themselves. The following statements have been 604 collected from old or young informants who were urged to express their inner feelings on this question:

1) The maternal uncle must provide the ntehe for the first child of his sister. However this is not *yila*, it is a *nau*, a law, and if it is transgressed no direct harm will follow. (I. p. 46.)

2) Men and women do not bathe in the same spot in the lake 183 of Rikatla. Why? Not on account of a yila, but on account of 834

2: Junod M-3 (1895-1909) 1927 Thonga

fault of Bantu religion is that it is non-moral, that of Bantu morality is that it is non-religious. No supreme legislator has ordained it. Hence the want of the idea of the absolute in the dictates of the Bantu conscience. 577 183

Nevertheless, the rudiments of morality are present in the Thonga conscience, the feeling of duty, the sense of right and wrong, and these are independent of the essentially self-interested idea of taboo.

C. RELATION BETWEEN TABOO, SACREDNESS AND MORALITY.

Some modern Ethnographers see in the taboo idea the origin of that of the sacred, and of morality. Amongst South African Bantus, the idea of sacredness is not a prominent one. It may be said that the person of the chief is sacred to them, being set apart; the law of hierarchy, the right of precedence belonging to the elder brother is also sacred, and this conception is very closely allied to that of taboo, though it does not necessarily contain the idea of danger. But if sacredness has been in certain cases a natural development of taboo, I do not think this is the case with moral ideas. 784 577 183

In some cases, morality distinctly preceded taboo; speaking of theft, we have just seen the taboo conception grafted on to a

succeed in persuading their comrades to a unanimous refusal of obedience, and as soon as they feel themselves thus agreed they will oppose their Principal apparently with a good conscience, despite his most persuasive arguments and all the patience that he may display. Morally speaking, they are clearly wrong; religiously also; the principles which they have themselves adopted indubitably condemn them. Yet they will maintain their resistance as long as they can face their master with a united front. But if the Principal is clever enough to take one or two of them — the most sensible — apart, and convince them, then the charm is broken. Feeling themselves divided, the pupils at once come to the conclusion that they are wrong, and they readily submit to the will of their superior. Such events may take place in other colleges, and amongst other races, I am afraid, but the difference is that amongst Bantus, just emerging from the state of collectivism, where morality depended not on the laws of a clearly conceived, holy God, but on the will of the community, the feeling of being right or wrong is above all determined by the attitude of the group. (See my paper on The Magic Conception of Nature amongst Bantus. *South African Journal of Science*. Nov. 1920).

784 primitive moral idea ; we have also met with a taboo evolving from
577 a ~~notion~~ of disgust (nyenya) (p. 83) ; or of decency (p. 580). I do
183 not assert that it could be proved that the moral restriction in all cases preceded the taboo prohibition. There is on the other hand no ground for asserting that the moral ideas are a natural development of original taboos ; these two sets of ideas seem to be parallel in the domain of conduct, just as Ancestrolatry and the idea of an All-Father are in religion.